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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 000627

SIPDIS

DEPT PASS TO AF/W:DBANKS/TEITELBAUM, AF/FO FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/13/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [GH](#)

SUBJECT: PNC FLAGBEARER - DR. EDWARD N. MAHAMA - SERVICE
WITH HONESTY

REF: A. ACCRA 605

[1](#)B. ACCRA 612

[1](#)C. ACCRA 618

[1](#)D. ACCRA 623

Classified By: AMBASSADOR PAMELA E. BRIDGEWATER FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND
(D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On May 12 Ambassador Bridgewater hosted People's National Convention (PNC) flagbearer Dr. Edward N. Mahama for lunch at her residence. The relaxed and soft-spoken flagbearer said he shares the philosophy from a statement by Mahatma Gandhi who said "Live simply so that others may simply live." Dr. Mahama informed the Ambassador and DCM that he and CPP flagbearer Kwesi Nduom had met over the weekend and are working to join forces for the December elections. "It is only a matter of who will be the flagbearer and who will be the running mate that needs to be decided." Another meeting between the two parties is slated for Tuesday, May 13. Dr. Mahama presented views on managing Ghana's oil revenues, using tax incentives to encourage the return of Ghanaians living abroad, and improving the tourism sector. End Summary.

Diplomatic Intervention

[1](#)2. (C) Dr. Mahama started off by thanking the Ambassador for her intervention in getting a road in front of his clinic paved after 17 years of unsuccessful requests to the government. Dr. Mahama stated that he as well as numerous clients and concerned citizens had complained to the Government for years to get the road paved in front of his clinic to no avail, and that it was only after the Ambassador commented to someone in Government about how difficult it was to get to Dr. Mahama's office for a meeting due to the bad road that something happened. Dr. Mahama went on to say that regrettably, too often that is how things work or don't work in Ghana.

PNC-CPP Joining Forces

[1](#)3. (C) Dr. Mahama stated that his supporters throughout the country have been encouraging him to work with Nduom to "unite Nkrumah's Party." Mahama and Nduom met over the weekend to discuss joining forces for the December election and worked out most of the issues. Mahama indicated that he and Nduom would meet again on May 13 to discuss and hopefully decide who would be the flagbearer and who would be the running mate. (Note: Reftel C stated that CPP Flagbearer Dr. Paa Kwesi Nduom envisions being the flagbearer with Dr. Mahama being the running mate). Although Dr. Mahama stated

he had "been in it the longest" he appeared to be open to discussions on who would take the lead. End note.)

¶4. (C) Dr. Mahama emphasized the need for politicians to work for the good of the people of the country and not use their offices for personal gains (e.g., acquiring luxury cars, mansions and offshore bank accounts) while children in their districts sit under trees to learn and infrastructure lags behind. Dr. Mahama also voiced concern over the growing number of Ghanaians who identify themselves first in terms of their ethnicity as opposed to being Ghanaian.

Incentives to Bring Ghanaians Back and Welcome the Diaspora

¶5. (C) Dr. Mahama's plan to encourage Ghanaians to return is to offer tax incentives to those who set up businesses and invest in the country. The heavy tax he had to pay on his car and other personal items were examples of additional disincentives for Ghanaians to return home. As for tourism, Dr. Mahama would look at ways to link neighboring countries for the Diaspora to visit via luxury cruise liners. He would also encourage more private investments in the hotel sector to promote tourism. When asked how he would manage Ghana's oil find if elected, Dr. Mahama stated that he would work with Parliament to ensure the funds were properly allocated and accounted for to improve the quality of life for the Ghanaian public.

¶6. (C) Comment: Dr. Mahama is a very knowledgeable, experienced and well-liked candidate. If the PNC and CPP are able to join forces, the December elections could be even

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closer. It is unlikely that the CPP/PNC alliance can pull off an election upset. We believe, however, that the winning candidate will feel obliged to take into consideration some of the bread and butter issues in alliance, as they are dear to the hearts of the majority of Ghana's population, and are important to propel Ghana towards its full economic potential. End comment.
BRIDGEWATER